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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet is a statement of the National Hispanic Educational Platform, which is based on the premise that Hispanic ideals, history, culture, and the Spanish language have a legitimate and important place in the social and governmental structure of the United States. It identifies four rights that are the cornerstone of education for Hispanic and all children: (1) the right of equal access to all educational resources and programs; (2) the right to strive for and expect excellence; (3) the right and responsibility of Hispanic parents and community members to be involved in educational decision-making; and (4) the right to strive for and maintain cultural diversity. Recommendations for action at the Federal, State, and local levels are made. (CJM)

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Equity, Excellence, Involvement, and Pluralism:

A New Day for America's Children

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The National Hispanic Educational Platform

PREAMBLE

The Hispanic community of the United States, representing over 20 million persons, reaffirms its belief in the greatness of our country which is based on the diverse, pluralistic nature of its people. From the very beginning, Hispanic culture and the Spanish language have played an integral role in the growth and development of this country. We, therefore, believe that Hispanic ideals, history, culture, and the Spanish language have a legitimate and important place in the social and governmental structure of this country.

As Hispanics, it is our view that basic to the American way of life are the right of equity for all; the right to strive for and expect excellence; the right and responsibility to be involved in the national concerns; and the right to protect and retain our diversity. It is these four rights that represent the cornerstone upon which the education of our children — and of all children — should be based.

We believe Hispanic ideals have an important place in the structure of this country.

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EQUITY:
Providing Equal Access for All Children

The National Commission on Excellence stated: "All, regardless of race or class or economic status are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost." As a community we have had to resort to federal intervention to ensure equal educational opportunity. Our children will have their fair chance only when they are guaranteed equal access to all educational resources and programs.

At the Federal Level We Recommend That:

1. The President, through the Departments of Justice and Education, vigorously monitor and *enforce* current statutes that promote educational equity.
2. Congress establish a special Congressional Oversight Committee, which includes Hispanic members, to monitor enforcement of educational equity by federal agencies.
3. Congress reauthorize, strengthen and increase funding for the ESEA, Title VII, Bilingual Education Act.
4. The federal government increase funding for effective education programs which benefit Hispanic and other students, including Head Start, Chapter I, Chapter II, Follow Through, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented programs.
5. The federal government provide additional funding for non-remedial education programs to school districts with high percentages of children from Hispanic and low income families.
6. Congress amend Chapter I and Special Education laws to ensure that children are placed in regular classrooms as soon as they are ready, as determined by joint decisions of teachers and parents.
7. Congress revise the Education Block Grant program to assure the monies are distributed equitably, do not supplant local funds, and meet the needs of 'high cost' children for which they were intended. Additionally, assure that states comply with federal civil rights laws and monitor nondiscrimination provisions of the law.
8. Congress expand migrant education programs as well as ensure that school districts not use migrant funds to supplant local funds.
9. The President and Congress demonstrate their support of public education by not enacting legislation authorizing tuition tax credits.

Our children will have their fair chance only when they are guaranteed equal access.

At the State and Local Level We Recommend That:

1. States develop and implement funding distribution formulas that eliminate the great disparities in per pupil expenditures between high and low wealth school districts.

2. States require individual school districts to distribute funds in such a manner that all schools, programs and student ability groups receive an equitable share of available funds.

3. Governors and State Legislatures demonstrate their commitment to public education by rejecting tuition tax credits.

4. Governors, through their Attorneys General, vigorously monitor and enforce state statutes that promote educational equity.

5. States enact policies which guarantee Hispanic children equal access and opportunity to use *all* available educational resources (such as computer technology) in their full range of capabilities and not merely as tools for remedial education.

6. States enact policies which prohibit routine and dead end tracking of Hispanic students into nonacademic programs.

7. States require local districts to assure that Hispanic girls are not routinely placed in vocational secretarial or nonacademic programs.

EXCELLENCE:
Setting and Achieving High Standards

An excellent system must expect, assist in achieving, and reward outstanding performance, develop all students to their fullest potential, encourage parent and community involvement in the process and build on the cultural strengths of its student body.

An excellent system must . . . develop all students to their fullest potential.

At the Federal Level We Recommend That:

1. The federal government fund experimental education programs targeted to school districts with high concentrations of low-income and Hispanic children, and aimed at educational excellence in:
   - mathematics, science, and English;
   - bilingual education,
   - use of the new information technologies;
   - foreign language acquisition.

2. Congress expand the ten percent corporate philanthropical deduction to include lending of personnel and equipment to public schools in districts with high concentrations of low-income or Hispanic children.
3. The President and Congress vigorously enforce P.L. 94-311 which requires the "collection and regular publication of statistics indicating the social, health, and economic condition of Americans of Spanish origin or descent"; and require that the information be provided by subgroups within the Hispanic population.

At the State and Local Level We Recommend That:

1. States require a core curriculum of math, science, language arts, and social science. Such a requirement must be accompanied by academic support programs which close the gap in performance between Hispanic and Anglo students.
2. State and local districts adopt policies which ensure hiring of qualified professional Hispanic personnel in all progams.
3. States assure that teacher certification standards include ability to work with students and parents, competency in instructional methods and expertise in the content area to be taught, and knowledge of the multicultural nature of the state in which the educator is to teach.
4. States establish teacher recertification requirements that include results of performance evaluations, improved performance of students, educational experience other than college credit, ability to work effectively with parents and students, and an understanding of the multicultural nature of the U.S. and the community being served.
5. States include Hispanic community representation in proportion to their numbers in all advisory commissions and committees setting minimum teacher competency standards and tenure laws.
6. States require in-service training for teachers and counseling personnel in the cultural background, linguistic needs, and learning styles of Hispanic students.
7. States ensure that standards for administrators include demonstrated competence in leadership, management, and goal setting; dealing satisfactorily with teachers, parents, and the community; and the results of performance evaluations.

INVOLVEMENT:
Recognizing Hispanic Parents as Partners

The success of educational reform ultimately rests on parents acting at the local level to ensure local commitment to issues

important to them and to their children. Hispanic parents have traditionally been excluded from the educational decision-making process. As a community concerned for our future and that of our children, we believe we have valuable contributions to make in the reform process.

At the Federal Level We Recommend That:

1. The federal government and individual states assure that local districts increase Hispanic parent involvement in their children's education by 1) systematically identifying and utilizing Hispanic parent volunteers in the classroom; 2) training Hispanic parents on educational and leadership issues, and 3) encouraging involvement of Hispanics on school committees and boards.
2. The federal government and individual states assure that all mandatory educational programs contain formal, continued and substantive Hispanic parent involvement in 1) reviewing grant applications, 2) hiring of educational staff, 3) goal setting, and 4) program evaluation.
3. The federal government and individual states assure that all education-related parent and/or community advisory groups include Hispanics in proportion to the Hispanic student population being served.
4. The federal government and individual states enforce compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

At the State and Local Level We Recommend That:

1. States mandate the establishment of local parent/community school accountability committees, which include Hispanic parents. These committees would work in partnership with the school to improve education at the local school level to:
   - assist schools in setting goals, gathering information on and evaluating school performance and reporting results to the local community.
   - monitor and comment on whether there is equitable distribution of funds among programs and ability groups.
   - monitor all school academic programs to assure access by Hispanic children;
   - advise in the hiring of educational staff and review and comment on the participation and treatment of minority staff;
   - obtain data by ethnicity on test scores, drop outs, retentions, suspensions, and expulsions.
2. States assure active Hispanic parent involvement on state-level advisory committees dealing with education finance equalization; educator evaluation, training and certification; and development and evaluation of state mandated educational programs.

We have valuable contributions to make in the reform process.

PLURALISM:
Using Cultural Diversity as a Building Block

The vision of the Spanish throne led to the discovery of this country. Our forefathers' contributions are seen in mining laws, agricultural products and techniques, and even in the feats of the legendary cowboys; thus, Hispanic culture and the Spanish language have played an integral role in the growth and development of this country. Today the Hispanic community, bilingual in nature, is a valuable national resource in an increasingly interdependent world. Our educational system should utilize and build on that resource.

At the Federal Level We Recommend That:

1. The federal government recognize the valuable linguistic resource of the nation's Hispanic people, and adopt a policy and finance programs designed to encourage the acquisition of a second language by all citizens as a means to facilitate international relations and trade, and to enrich the lives of its citizens.

2. The federal government establish a policy and finance programs that recognize bilingual education as a sound and effective method of instruction which can develop language proficiency and academic competence in two languages.

3. All federal education programs earmark funds for Hispanic and Limited English Proficient (LEP) children.

4. Congress reestablish categorical aid for desegregation of school districts. Such legislation should include participation by non-profit, community-based organizations representative of the minority groups in the desegregating districts.

The vision of the Spanish throne led to the discovery of this country.

At the State and Local Level We Recommend That:

1. States require all curricula to be complementary to the culturally pluralistic background of children being taught in order to provide adequate role models and relevant instructional content.

2. States review and revise social studies curricula and requirements for state-adopted textbooks so that all children be taught the total United States history, which includes the contributions of both genders and all racial, ethnic and minority groups and their respective leaders.

3. States develop and implement programs which develop language proficiency and academic competence in two languages in all school-aged children.

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